

COUNCIL COMING ATTRACTIONS



Week of March 6, 2017



Economic Development Fund for Small Business Assistance, Property Tax Credit for Certain Seniors and Veterans, and Urban Agricultural Tax Credit




Council Coming Attractions is a summary of some of the issues before the Council. All Council staff reports and additional information on each item scheduled for Council or Committee review can be viewed at: <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/ondemand/index.html> .

Also the Council meeting schedule may change from time to time. The current Council and Committee agendas can also be viewed at:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/ondemand/index.html> .

-  On March 7 the Council session will begin at 11 a.m. with a proclamation presented by Council President Berliner recognizing Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week.
-  On March 9 at 7 p.m., the Council is scheduled to meet with the City of Rockville and City of Gaithersburg on Bus Rapid Transit at the Casey Community Center in Gaithersburg.

COUNCIL

-  **Bill 4-17, Economic Development Fund - Small Business Assistance Program - Amendments**
The Council is scheduled to introduce Bill 4-17. Councilmember Elrich is the lead sponsor of Bill 4-17. Councilmembers Floreen, Katz, and Rice are cosponsors. A public hearing is scheduled for April 4 at 1:30 p.m. The staff report can be viewed at:
http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=136&event_id=5014&meta_id=132436 .

Bill 4-17 would expand the eligibility for grants or loans under the small business assistance program to a business adversely impacted by a County redevelopment project located in a Parking Lot District. The Bill would also expand the definition of a County redevelopment project to include a project constructed by a private entity for use, in whole or in part, by the County as a public facility.

- The Council unanimously enacted Bill 6-12 in 2012 to establish a program to assist small businesses located in either an enterprise zone or an urban renewal area of the County that are adversely impacted by a County redevelopment project or a redevelopment project located on County property. Councilmember Nancy Navarro was the lead sponsor of Bill 6-12. Council President Berliner and Councilmembers Floreen and Leventhal were cosponsors.
- Bill 6-12 required the Director of the Department of Economic Development to create and operate the program, which was transferred to the Director of Finance as part of the law creating the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation and eliminating the Department of Economic Development. Subject to Council appropriation, the Director may award a grant or loan from the Economic Development Fund (EDF) to an eligible small business and provide technical assistance and training to a small business receiving financial assistance under the program.
- Bill 4-17 would expand this program to a business adversely impacted by a County redevelopment project located in a Parking Lot District.



Bill 42-16, Taxation - Property Tax Credit - Elderly Individuals and Veterans

The Council is scheduled to vote on Bill 42-16. The Government Operations and Fiscal Policy (GO) Committee (3-0) recommends enactment with amendments to increase the maximum assessed value for eligibility for elderly residents to \$650,000 and to require individuals to apply by April 1 of the year in which the tax credit is sought. The Committee also recommends an effective date of July 1, 2017.

Councilmember Floreen is the lead sponsor of Bill 42-16. Councilmembers Navarro, Rice, and Katz are cosponsors. The staff report can be viewed at:

http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=136&event_id=5014&meta_id=132439.

As introduced Bill 42-16 would create a new property tax credit for residents who are at least 65 years old and who have lived in the same home, with an assessed value of \$500,000 or less, for at least 40 years. Retired members of the U.S. Armed Forces who are at least 65 years old are also eligible for the tax credit if their home has an assessed value of \$500,000 or less. Residents who qualify would be eligible to receive a 20 percent credit for the property tax imposed on their homes. The credit would be granted annually for up to five years, subject to application requirements.



Bill 31-16, Taxation - Urban Agricultural Tax Credit - Established

The Council is scheduled to vote on Bill 31-16. The GO Committee (3-0) recommends enactment with amendments. Councilmember Hucker is the lead sponsor of Bill 31-16. Councilmember Elrich is a cosponsor. The staff report can be viewed at:

http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=136&event_id=5014&meta_id=132441.

At the Nov. 3 GO Committee meeting, the Committee asked Council staff to redraft the payback provision, work with Finance to reduce the geographical area eligible for the credit to urban areas, and work with Finance to prepare options to limit the amount of the tax credit.

At the Feb. 9 GO Committee worksession the Committee amended Bill 31-16 to:

- narrow the definition of urban agricultural purposes to traditional farming;
- require at least \$5,000 in gross revenue from farming to receive the credit;
- amend the definition of gross revenue to include the value of produce donated to charity;
- limit the credit to 80 percent of the property tax owed;

- limit the size of eligible properties to one-half acre to three acres;
- change the department that determines eligibility from Finance to Agriculture;
- limit the geographical area for eligibility to a residential zone within 1,000 feet of a Metro Station Policy area or locations in a Metro Station Policy Area; and
- amend the payback provision to ensure that the payback is for the year the property is no longer eligible for the credit.

As introduced Bill 31-16 would establish an urban agricultural tax credit against real property tax, define an urban agricultural property and an urban agricultural purpose, and establish eligibility for an urban agricultural tax credit. A property owner must conduct at least two urban agricultural purposes on the property to be eligible for the credit, and the term of the credit would be five years. The credit would equal the property tax otherwise due on the property.

COMMITTEE



Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service Emergency Operations and Community Risk Reduction

On March 6 at 9:30 a.m. the Public Safety (PS) Committee will discuss Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) Emergency Operations and Community Risk Reduction. Those expected to attend the meeting include: John Kinsley, Division Chief, MCFRS; Alan Hinde, Division Chief, MCFRS; and Beth Anne Nesselt, Spokesperson and Community Outreach, MCFRS. The staff report can be viewed at:

http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/Viewer.php?view_id=136&event_id=5274&meta_id=132422.

MCFRS representatives will give a PowerPoint presentation with statistics from events that occurred in 2016 and information about community fire prevention efforts.



Office of Consumer Protection

The Committee also will receive an update from Eric Friedman, Director, Office of Consumer Protection (OCP), that will include work on unlicensed new home builders, towing damage complaints, and a recent court case where unlicensed home improvement workers were convicted for defrauding elderly residents. He will also provide an update on OCP's new database system. The staff report can be found at:

http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/Viewer.php?view_id=136&event_id=5274&meta_id=132397.

- As part of National Consumer Protection Week (March 5-11), OCP hopes to announce the launch of new "Language Friendly Hours," when OCP will have volunteers fluent in Chinese, Korean, and French in the office to meet with consumers and businesses, in an effort to facilitate communication between OCP staff and non-English speaking individuals.



Health and Human Services Delivery in East County

On March 6 at 9:30 a.m. the Health and Human Services (HHS) Committee will receive an update on health and human service delivery in the East County. Uma Ahluwalia, Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Jewru Bandeh, Director, East County Regional Service Center, will attend the meeting to discuss the East County Opportunity Zone report. In addition to this report, the Committee will be presented with PowerPoint presentations on East County community demographics and an analysis of transportation options.

The following are links to these two presentations:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/REPORTS/EastCountyCountyStat-CommunityAnalytics.pdf>

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/REPORTS/EastCounty-Transportation.pdf>.

The Council staff report can be viewed at:

http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=136&event_id=5272&meta_id=132418.

- The HHS Committee and Councilmember Navarro have held several meetings focused on the need for improved service delivery in the East County. These meetings were an extension of the discussion that occurred during the FY17 Operating Budget worksessions. The FY17 budget includes funding for a DHHS social worker, to work out of the East County Regional Center, and a Community Grant to Family Services, Inc. to expand the capacity of the Neighborhood Opportunity Network.
- At the May and July meetings, the Committee received a briefing from County Stat on economic and employment challenges for households in the east county and the drive time to locations in the County where government and other support services can be accessed.
- The Committee also received information from the partnerships that are working to leverage resources of non-profit and faith-based organizations, government agencies, and Montgomery College (known as the East County Providers Network).
- At the July meeting, the Committee was informed that a Plan would be ready by December or January so that it could be considered by the County Executive before his recommended budget is finalized and so that the Council could also consider it as a part of its budget sessions.
- Many households in the East County are challenged by low incomes and have needs for enhanced services including health and mental health, income supports, child care, food, and positive youth development programs. While there is access to the East County Regional Services Center, many times access to services requires travel to Silver Spring, Wheaton, or Rockville.



A Food Secure Montgomery - Five Year Strategic Plan

The Committee will also receive a presentation on the strategic plan to create a food secure County in five years. Those expected to attend the meeting include: Dan Hoffman, Chief Innovation Officer; Heather Bruskin, Executive Director, Montgomery County Food Council; Marla Caplon, Director, Food and Nutrition Services, Montgomery County Public Schools; and Jackie DeCarlo, Executive Director, Manna Food Center.

- In July 2016, the Council enacted Bill 19-16 that directed the County's Chief Innovation Officer to propose and update a Strategic Plan to End Food Insecurity in the County. Council President Berliner was the lead sponsor of Bill 19-16. All other Councilmembers were cosponsors. In developing the Strategic Plan, the CIO was required to consult with many organizations inside and outside of County government. The full strategic plan entitled "A Food Secure Montgomery," can be viewed at:

http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/exec/Resources/Files/pdf/MoCo_Food-Security-Plan_2017.pdf.

The staff report can be viewed at:

http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=136&event_id=5272&meta_id=132393.

- According to the strategic plan, "A lack of access to healthy, nourishing food undermines the health and well-being of children and families. In Montgomery County, 7% of the County's population is estimated to be food insecure (77,780). Children are especially vulnerable to families' economic status. Nearly 13.9% of the County's children are estimated to be food insecure, representing 33,000 children. This number of food insecure children is higher than any other County in the state."



Bill 41-16, Community Zoning and Land Use Resource Officer

On March 6 at 2 p.m. the Planning, Housing and Economic Development (PHED) Committee will review Bill 41-16. Council President Berliner is the lead sponsor of Bill 41-16. Councilmembers Hucker and Katz are cosponsors. The staff report can be found at:

http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/Viewer.php?view_id=136&event_id=5218&meta_id=132406.

As introduced Bill 41-16 would replace provisions for a People's Counsel with provisions for a Community Zoning and Land Use Resource Officer, who would provide an independent source of information to educate residents on how, when, and where they may participate in the public approval process for sketch plans, subdivisions, site plans, conditional use applications, and variances. Bill 41-16 would prohibit the Resource Officer from being a direct participant in any proceeding in the development process. The primary function of the Community Zoning and Land Use Resource Officer would be to:

- ✓ meet with community members to inform them of critical decision points in the process;
- ✓ educate community members individually or in group meetings on how to develop effective testimony before decision making bodies; and
- ✓ answer questions concerning zoning and land use from community members or community organizations.



Bill 49-16, Workforce Development - Microlending Program

The Committee also will review Bill 49-16. Council President Berliner and Councilmembers Navarro and Hucker are the lead sponsors of Bill 49-16. Councilmembers Floreen, Rice, Elrich, Katz, and Riemer are cosponsors. The staff report can be found at:

http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/Viewer.php?view_id=136&event_id=5218&meta_id=132408.

As introduced Bill 49-16 would require the County's Workforce Development Corporation to administer a culturally proficient microlending program to provide financial and technical assistance to County entrepreneurs; establish criteria for the operation of the microlending program; and require an annual report.

- County residents with businesses headquartered in the County would be eligible for microloans of up to \$15,000. Loan recipients would be required to participate in educational and technical assistance that would be part of the program.
- The program may use non-County funds for capital and program administration. Materials and assistance would be provided in multiple languages.
- WorkSource Montgomery would have to report on the status of the microlending program each year as part of its annual report to the Executive and Council.



Implementation of Intensive Housing Inspection Program

The Committee will close out the meeting with a review and discussion of the report on how the Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) will implement the intensive housing inspection program in the County as required by Bill 19-15, Landlord-Tenant Relations – Licensing of Rental Housing – Landlord-Tenant Obligations. Councilmember Elrich was the lead sponsor of Bill 19-15. Councilmember Navarro was a cosponsor. The Council enacted Bill 19-15 to address issues raised in the 2010 Report of the County Tenant Work Group. Bill 19-15 made several changes to the landlord-tenant law that were principally aimed at enhancing the existing rights of tenants and improving the quality of rental housing through increased inspections.

The Committee's discussion is expected to include the way DHCA will prioritize inspections under the new law, the standards that are used for inspections, and an estimate of the cost for conducting inspections. Those expected to attend the meeting include: Clarence Snuggs, Director, DHCA; Chris Anderson, Chief, Community Affairs Division, DHCA; Jalal Greene, Chief, Housing Division, DHCA; and Tim Goetzinger, Management and Budget, DHCA.

The staff report can be viewed at:

http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=136&event_id=5218&meta_id=132410 .



2017 Mobility Assessment Report

On March 9 at 2 p.m. the Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment (T&E) Committee will receive a briefing on the 2017 Mobility Assessment Report from the Montgomery County Planning Department. The full report can be viewed:

http://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/2017MobilityAssessmentReport_web.pdf .

The Council staff report will be available on March 7. The 2017 Mobility Assessment Report (MAR) summarizes the trends, data, and analysis used to track and measure transportation mobility conditions in the County. The purpose of this report is to provide information to residents and public officials regarding the current state of the County's transportation system, showing not only how the system is performing, but also how it is changing and evolving. Increased availability of transportation system performance information from both internal and external databases and advances in geospatial analytical tools provide the resources to understand the changing nature of how people are using the County's transportation systems.



Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission's Temporary Road Patching Operations

The Committee also will receive an update on the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission's (WSSC) temporary road patching operations. The staff report will be available on March 7. Council President Berliner and Councilmember Hucker have both expressed concerns about the quality of work being performed by WSSC contractors after utility work in the roadway is complete. The Committee will discuss these issues with representatives from WSSC and the County's Department of Permitting Services.